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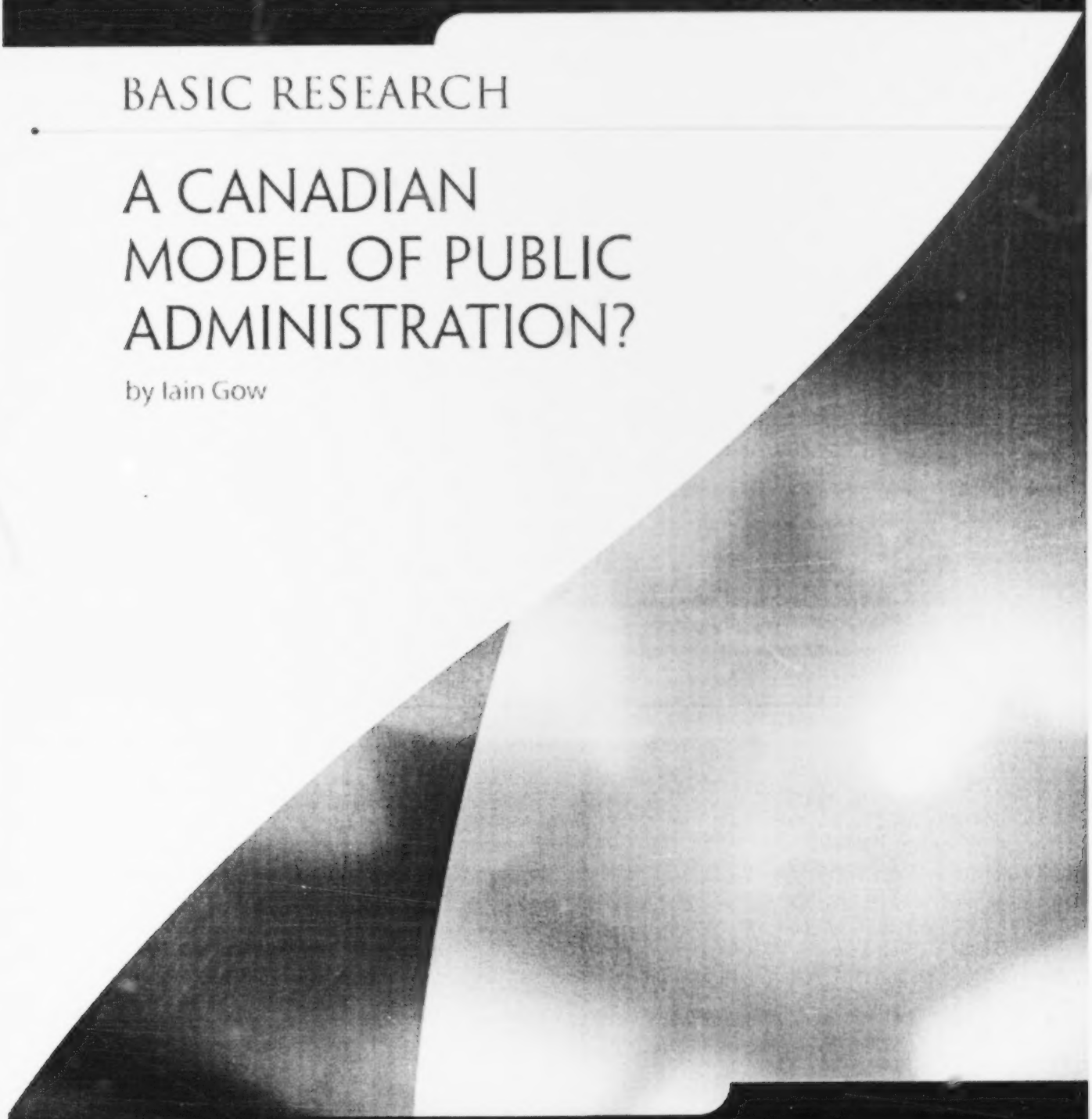
BASIC RESEARCH

A CANADIAN MODEL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION?

by Iain Gow



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Preface

The Government of Canada is rooted in the belief that a well-performing public sector is essential for a strong global society and economy. That is, economic and social development are not possible without an effective state. The past fifteen years were marked by an important movement of public management reforms, aimed at streamlining and modernizing many aspects of public administration. Some argue that Canada has created a unique public sector model when compared with countries such as Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The "Canadian model" seeks a balance between the virtues of traditional bureaucracy on one hand, and entrepreneurship and innovation on the other. Also attributed to this model is a commitment to fundamental Canadian values such as social fairness and redistributive policies, and a professional, non-partisan public service.

As part of its new Governance Research Program, the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) feels it is vital and timely to bring conceptual clarity to the existence of a "Canadian model" of public administration. Federal practitioners must not only be aware of the foundation of Canadian public administration, but also understand its complex and recent transformations in order to be prepared for new public sector reforms. CSPS, in partnership with the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), is pleased to release *A Canadian Model of Public Administration?* by James Iain Gow, a highly respected scholar in the field of Canadian public administration. Based on extensive reviews of recent literature, Iain Gow determines the extent to which a Canadian model of public administration exists. Readers will appreciate his insight on the subject, as well as his apt identification of the core elements and context in which the "Canadian model" has evolved.

I am confident that those interested in public administration and public sector reform will find great value in this essay. CSPS is proud to have supported this project which represents a significant contribution to our thinking in the field of governance.

Janice Cochrane
President

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About the Author

James Iain Gow is professor emeritus, University of Montreal, and a dean in the field of Canadian public administration. His many works include *From Bureaucracy to Public Management: The Administrative Culture of the Government of Canada* (with O.P. Dwivedi), *Learning From Others: Administrative Innovations Among Canadian Governments*, *Innovation in the Public Service*, and *Histoire de l'administration publique québécoise, 1867–1970*.

Summary

The task here is to see if there is a Canadian model of public administration, that is, a simplified version of how Canadian public administration operates or functions. The goal is to identify the main traits that are typically Canadian, not merely what makes the model different from others. As compared to models of administrative reform, a model of public administration extends beyond the operating mode of the administration to relations with the key actors in its environment: government, Parliament, the judiciary, political parties, interest groups, the media and the public. In today's context, a Canadian model must also look at significant practices in the provinces, the territories and native self-governments. The model developed is compared to former clerk of the Privy Council Jocelyne Bourgon's Canadian model of public service reform and the classic bureaucratic model developed in Canada after World War II. The present model has five main features: 1) strong political control, restrained by the federal system, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, autonomous parliamentary agents and public opinion; 2) a strong legal framework, backed up by the Charter and the courts; 3) an autonomous non-partisan, professional public service; 4) a tradition of moderation and pragmatism with both political and public service leaders; 5) fairly strong tolerance for ambiguity, as present in federal–provincial relations, equal opportunity for minorities and new forms of government for the northern territories and self-governing native communities.

A Canadian Model of Public Administration?

Canada's public service has long enjoyed an enviable reputation in the world. Its quality, competence and autonomy have been widely admired. In recent years, however, the spotlight has been held by more adventurous Commonwealth countries (Britain, New Zealand and Australia) or by the United States, whose reforms were seen as vanguards in the public management reform movement. In these circumstances, it is useful to ask if there is an identifiable Canadian model of public administration and what its contours might be. Do we also, in the words of a satirical sketch of *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, display that part of the Canadian heritage that has us finishing "just out of the medals" at the Olympics, or do we have a unique model that has its own virtues and defects?

This essay is a review of recent literature that provides clues on this subject. Its organization is very simple: in the first section, I define the key terms of the subject; in the second section, the elements of a Canadian model are sought across a broad range of questions in the federal, provincial, territorial and native governments; and in the third section, the contours of a Canadian model are presented.

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Defining the Terms

Searching the literature for the existence and characteristics of a Canadian model of public administration first requires clarification of all three terms.

Model

A model is a simplified representation of a real system.[1] The operation, writes Karl Deutsch, depends on the interests of the observer, the actual characteristics of the situation to be known, the selective operations by which these characteristics can be experienced and measured, and the system of symbols by which these data may be presented: "Together, the set of symbols and the set of operating rules form a symbolic system or a model."[2] For Norbert Wiener, instead of Aristotelian classification, we are looking for the operating mode for each activity.[3]

Models help to organize, explain, understand and predict the behaviour of the systems they represent. While our purpose is mainly to understand and explain, if a Canadian model does emerge, it will have some limited explanatory power, since such systems do not usually change overnight. It must be admitted, however, that the British, Australian or New Zealand models of *reform* have prepared us for abrupt changes in the way systems similar to ours operate. In this case, we must expect that a Canadian model will reflect recent changes in administrative and political practice, and may well change again soon.

Of the four kinds of models identified by Réjean Landry, ours will be verbal; that is, it will belong to the group of symbolic models, as opposed to graphic, physical and role models, but it will not be mathematical or informatic, being of a more general nature. It will have to be a brief statement of the essential characteristics of Canadian public administration, along the lines of Max Weber's famous bureaucratic model, William Niskanen's rational choice critique of that model, or Gérard Timsit's models of state–administration relations. The test of this kind of model is not its mathematical or logical predictive power but its ability to sum up accurately the system being studied, the rightness of the fit. It would be proven wrong or inadequate if it failed to account for important variables or gave too much attention to others that proved to be secondary or trivial.[4]

An organizational system, says Gilles Paquet (after Donald Schon), is composed of a structure or set of rules; a technology or set of tools used by the members; and a theory, or the views of the members about the purposes, the environment and the future of the system. Certainly we should retain structures and technologies. However, the third category should probably be enlarged to include both theories-in-use and values – in other words, to include culture. The behaviour of the human elements of an organization is shaped in part by their perceptions of how things work but also by their preferences and the significance they give to events and situations.[5]

Public Administration

The term "public administration" is broader in scope than that of "public-service reform"[6] or managerial reform.[7] A model of public administration would have to take into account the operating mode of the public service, including modes of reforming, and also the relationships between the public service and the most significant elements in its environment: first, the other institutions immediately involved in the conduct of public affairs, the government, Parliament and the judiciary; second, major actors outside the state apparatus, political parties, interest groups, and the media; and, third, the public in their attitudes towards government in general and the public service in particular.

In a series of powerful theoretical works, Gérard Bergeron gave us the most useful way of looking at the administrative function within the state.[8] Along with the governmental function, the administrative function shares roles of responsibility, initiative and action, whereas the legislative and judicial functions are more of a controlling nature. Along with the judicial function, the administrative function is one of carrying out decisions made by the two decision-making functions, the governmental and the legislative. Public administration is thus not a stand-alone activity; it is a dependent field, strongly conditioned by those who govern and by the ideas, institutions and forces that surround it. It is a model within a model. Moreover, it is of necessity a macro model; no such undertaking can hope to capture the varieties of micro-level practices. Only their accumulation into recognizable patterns can attract our attention.

Canadian Public Administration

For the first hundred years of Canada's existence, the search for an articulated model of Canadian public administration would have concentrated on the federal government. It led the way in administrative reform and in the reflection that preceded such reform. The federal government has been the leader in administrative reform since 1970,[9] but the province-building of the 1960s led the larger provinces to develop their own resources and institutions for administrative reform. Thus, a look for a Canadian model of public administration will have to accord some attention to fields in which the provinces have developed noteworthy practices. Moreover, recent reforms in the area of aboriginal self-government have led to new ways of considering citizenship, the introduction of new criteria into policy development, and new language and possibly ethnic requirements for territorial and perhaps tribal administration.

Since any model we might find would depend in part on what we were looking for, it is important to decide exactly what this is. If our main aim were to see what makes us different, we would stress our particularities. Or, if we wanted to see how we typically do things these days, we would have to include many practices that were introduced sooner or are conducted more rigorously elsewhere. I prefer the latter. To paraphrase Barry Bozeman writing about public management, there is little that is unique to Canadian public administration, but its distinctive elements add up to a unique case.[10]

The distinctiveness of a model depends on both time and space. It is distinctive in relation to either previous models or what is going on elsewhere. The fact that we can talk about new models in Britain, Australia and New Zealand shows that a new model may emerge very quickly and accompany the overthrow of an older model. In this respect, some use the word "paradigm" to cover the new set of principles in distinction from the old. The suggestion that there is a Canadian model of public administration seems to imply that there is a more durable model that is being adapted to contemporary circumstances without losing all continuity.

Searching for Indicators

Our search for a Canadian model will begin with the Canadian political system, of which it is a part. We then look more closely at the government–administration interface, from the perspectives of both the government and the public service. In a third section, we look at what recent administrative reforms show us about our administrative system, with special attention to the financial, human resources and alternative service delivery subsystems. Final clues will be sought in the emerging native self-governments.

The Canadian Political System

In a short study such as this, it is only possible to consider the features of the system that bear on the administrative system. As a general rule, we will look for the guiding principles revealed by practice and try to avoid description.

The first things one would want to highlight for a foreign visitor would be the main constitutional structures: a Westminster system, in a federal state, with a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and an important number of customary rules.

We inherited from Britain a system of parliamentary government, in which the cabinet must have the support of the majority of the House of Commons. As Jacques Bourgault and Stéphane Dion have shown, in the years following World War II, Canadian governments developed a close facsimile of the ideal model of bureaucracy put forward at the beginning of the twentieth century by Max Weber.[11]

Two major exceptions to the Westminster system are present, however. From the beginning, Canada had a federal system, and the division of powers written into its Constitution gave the courts a power to review and reject legislation that British courts did not have. Canadian provinces are also important counterweights to federal power. Collectively, they spend much more and employ many more people than does the federal government. Then, the addition of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to the Constitution in 1982 gave the courts a vastly expanded power to appreciate legislation for its constitutionality.

Although many of our governing rules are now written down, there are still important customary rules arising from the Westminster tradition. The most important are ministerial responsibility, public service anonymity and public service neutrality.[12] These add an element of uncertainty into the life of the public service, for no one knows when an election may be held, or what issues may flare up in Parliament, or what exactly senior public servants may be held accountable for in parliamentary committees. Another little-discussed convention is that of the royal prerogative: it is the basis for many powers of the Canadian government, such as the right to conduct diplomatic relations, to declare war, to decide the number of ministers, to adopt regulations (largely symbolic today), and it was the

sole legal basis for the creation of the Maritime provinces.[13] While the realm of the conventional powers of the royal prerogative is destined to shrink, the powers remain an important source of confusion. According to Daniel Mockle, a situation is created whereby the state is above the law, as in matters of interpretation or environmental regulation. He considers the prerogative to be one of the obstacles to a developed administrative law.[14]

In recent practice, the political system has several characteristics that influence relations between political and administrative actors. While the Westminster system gives much power to the prime minister of a majority party, several observers have lately noted the very strong position of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien with respect to his colleagues and the senior public service.[15] One reason for this is that the weakness of regionally based opposition leaves Canada with a single dominant party.[16] Even before this, the Liberal party was "the government party," having been in power about three-quarters of the time since the mid-1930s.[17] Sir Robert Borden gets the credit for the original legislation, but the Liberals are the architects of the contemporary Canadian public service, having initiated in 1967 the first major changes to the Civil Service Act of 1918 with the legislation that accepted collective bargaining in the public service and that specified the roles of the Treasury Board and the newly named Public Service Commission. Moreover, they approved of the results of their work. In 1975, the president of the Treasury Board, Jean Chrétien, set off a controversy by issuing a publication claiming that federal public servants had a better sense of the state and of public service than did their Quebec counterparts.[18]

In evaluating the thesis of excessive power in the hands of the prime minister, Herman Bakvis notes among the contributing factors the inexperience of the House of Commons and the weakness of the Senate and of party caucuses (whose role in leadership selection is much greater in Britain, Australia and New Zealand). He sees the distribution of power in the Canadian federal system as a significant check on prime ministerial power, which is not available in two of the other countries.[19]

Except in the most extreme cases (Diefenbaker in 1963, Clark in 1979), the government controls the House of Commons, with its monopoly of the introduction of spending bills, its customary and statutory rights to introduce a legislative program (the Speech from the Throne), a budget and an expenditure budget. Its ascendancy is enhanced by the trend to an inexperienced legislature due to high levels of turnover.[20] Since 1980, governments have had far more parliamentary experience than have government or opposition backbenchers. This means that not only will a newly elected government have to choose inexperienced ministers, who are more prone to get into trouble than experienced ones, but also that backbenchers will not be in a good position to control the government effectively nor be able to deal competently and fairly with senior public servants appearing before House committees. These difficulties do not affect the Senate, which has shown itself on occasion to be a willing and efficient source of surveillance of both the government and the administration.

Canada has a strong and independent judiciary, empowered by the division of powers and, recently, by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The importance of this latter development for the administration may be seen in landmark decisions based on it throwing out the limits imposed by the Public Service Employment Act on political acts by employees during election campaigns and then requiring pay equity. David Clark sees in the Charter a source of an important difference between Canada and the United Kingdom. Whereas the Charter gave Canadians a sense of citizenship as individuals, "the judiciary in U.K. has had little impact in the area of public service."[21]

The Canadian political system in comparative perspective belongs to the Anglo-American group of countries, where pluralist liberalism is the prevailing mode of governance. With the exception of occasional ventures in Quebec, we have none of the varying degrees of state and societal corporatism identified in Europe by Gérard Boismenu.[22] The result is, in Alasdair Roberts' words, "a fragile state," one that had to struggle for control of its territory, and its foreign relations, to survive a series of major crises (the two world wars and the Great Depression) before building a welfare state in the thirty postwar years.[23] The welfare state in Canada was more comprehensive than that in the United States but did not reach the extent of those in most European countries. In the G-7 group of countries, Canadian rates of revenue gathering and public spending are a little above average, but that is only because of the low rates in the United States and Japan. Until Canadian aggregate government spending spiked to over half of gross domestic product in the early 1990s, it was well below that of the countries of the European Union and, since Program Review, has fallen again to eight points below the EU average.[24] Also, public sector employment in Canada places us in the middle of the pack of developed countries, having relatively fewer employees than the European countries and relatively more than the United States and Japan.[25]

The Canadian public has recently been shown by various studies and surveys to be less trustful of government, despite relatively high levels of personal satisfaction and pride in country.[26] As is the case in all developed countries, confidence in government institutions in Canada has declined and, with it, citizens' deference.[27] Politicians are believed to lose touch with their constituents over time. Public servants fare a little better than politicians in public esteem, but it is not high.[28]

In international comparisons, Canadians' moderation is confirmed. In Ronald Inglehart's and Geert Hofstede's summary graphs, Canada is to be found near the crossing of the two axes, that is, right in the middle. In the case of the employees in sixty-seven countries surveyed by Hofstede, Canadian respondents were not macho but also not overly concerned with the good of the group (a trait deemed to be more feminine) and were moderately tolerant of uncertainty. In Inglehart's survey of people in forty-three countries, Canadians placed themselves half-way between leaning towards traditional authority and secular rational authority, and were more concerned with well-being than with survival.[29]

The Government-Administration Interface

If we move in a little closer to our model, we may see a number of typical features that appear at the junction of the political and the administrative worlds. We look at its two poles as well as at the relationship between them.

As Herman Bakvis points out, the prime minister gains important power from the support of the two key central agencies, the Privy Council Office and the Treasury Board. Christopher Dunn succinctly describes how this institutionalization came about:

> The postwar has witnessed the replacement of the unaided (or traditional) cabinet by the institutionalized (or structured) cabinet. ... [T]here is not one basic form of institutionalized cabinet, but they all share one characteristic: the premier's role grows from that of mere personnel choice to that of organizational architect with regard to the structure and decision-making processes of cabinet.[30]

Dunn adds elsewhere that "[t]he study of the central executive shows that constant experimenta-

tion is the norm."[31] In general, the years of expanding budgets saw much more recourse to both numerous cabinet committees and a variety of central agencies, but financial rigour was accompanied by simplification of cabinet committee structures and the elimination of many agencies, particularly those of an advisory and planning nature.[32]

So we are left with a very few strong central agencies but a low level of institutionalization (meaning that each new prime minister can change almost anything he or she wants in structures and procedures). Peter Aucoin judges Canadian central agencies to be stronger than those of other Westminster systems.[33]

Central management by Treasury Board means the possibility of more policies and practices common to the whole administration than is the case in many developed countries. Some think that the reduced role of government and the new style of governance have hollowed out the role of the Treasury Board, but it remains the undisputed management board of the government. True, the Board is changing its role from one of controller to that of management board, concerning itself with strategic planning, setting standards and monitoring departmental performance. The Treasury Board Secretariat was also weakened by the cuts it accepted during Program Review (as one of the most affected departments) and by departures of experienced negotiators in voluntary early retirement. Even so, according to Evan Potter, the Board can still discipline departments at expenditure budget time, can intervene to help non-performing departments, and has the power to withdraw present devolutions if it should find it necessary. A good example of the board's residual central management power is the Shared Systems Initiative, by which it obliged departments to work together to share administrative systems and thus reduce the waste that too much departmental autonomy incurs.[34]

With occasional exceptions (Diefenbaker and early Mulroney), the government has trusted public servants not only to carry out its policies but to participate in their elaboration, most notably with administrative reform and program review.[35] By convention, the Privy Council Office now assures continuity when the party forming the government changes.[36] According to Jacques Bourgault, the degree of depoliticization shown in the appointments of deputy ministers in the federal government is unique among comparable countries.[37]

Perhaps one reason why recent Canadian governments have not feared capture by senior public servants as other political leaders in Westminster systems have is that, since the time of Paul Tellier as clerk of the Privy Council, the senior public service has been managed as a corporate group for its selection, training and evaluation.[38] In this way, they have been brought to consider the government's overall, or corporate, goals, as well as those of the department in which they serve.

Turning to the relationship between politicians and the public service, accountability remains a difficult problem. Canadian governments have not gone far in identifying the areas for which public servants are principally responsible to the legislature. The convention remains that they speak in parliamentary committee in the name of their minister. For their part, members have been unable "to ensure due process and fairness of Parliament's treatment of subordinate officials."[39] The greatly improved information made available to members of Parliament in the 1990s has had little impact on the work of members, an observation that has been made in other Commonwealth countries also.[40] If it is true, as reported by Evert Lindquist, that most annual reports are read by more people *before* they are printed, it may be because their purpose is that of a management tool and not one of external accountability.[41]

It is possible that the current ambiguity surrounding the parliamentary accountability of public

servants suits most ministers. As Daniel Cohn points out, one aspect of the recent élite consensus in developed countries, and one of the attractions of the new public management (NPM), is blame avoidance.[42] However, he agrees with Barbara Wake Carroll and David Dewar that the promise of the NPM to promote efficiency will fail if it is used for this purpose. In any event, for all of its symbolic power, the doctrine of individual ministerial responsibility has led to only two resignations in over one hundred years where ministers took "responsibility for maladministration in their own portfolio."[43] The convention that only the current minister may be held to account for a scandal or a serious problem limits the strength of parliamentary accountability.

Canada has some strong independent control agencies.[44] The most important is the Office of the Auditor General, which has led the public management reform movement in Canada.[45] The access commissioner complains about the culture of secrecy, and the privacy commissioner worries about abuses in the name of security. The official languages commissioner monitors the field, particularly the gap between the formal success of the law and the reality of language-use in the workplace. The Human Rights Commission verifies conformity with the Employment Equity Act. While they may, on occasion, overstep their terms of reference and generally do not have to answer to outside authorities, they constitute an important rampart against irresponsible administration. With the exception of the auditor general, who has an ambiguous role in the matter, the others all embody values other than efficiency and effectiveness that the system expects public servants to respect.[46]

The public service as a group has relied on its autonomous status for defence against partisan depredations. Unionization has not prevented unilateral action by governments in difficult periods over the last thirty years. The public service had little collective power when faced with governments determined to cut back. Even so, both the Mulroney (Public Service 2000) and Chrétien (La Relève and the Leadership Network) governments developed concern for the morale and condition of the public service.

Canadian public service culture is pragmatic, little driven by theory.[47] Senior public servants are interested in participating in governance and are willing to take risks and to answer for them if they have corresponding power.[48] Lower ranks are more cautious, more concerned with security.[49] All ranks are inclined to secrecy.

In a number of domains, this pragmatism has made it possible for federal officials to collaborate with those of hostile provincial governments.[50] In other areas, such as international relations, federal and Quebec officials carried on an intense and sometimes bitter rivalry.[51] Many of the experiments in horizontal management presented by Bourgault are ad hoc arrangements, made possible by the pragmatic collaboration of public servants from different federal departments and from other governments and organizations as well.[52]

There is some evidence of variations in public-service culture by age cohort.[53] The different world views and values of mature members (those born before 1945), the Baby Boomers (born between 1945 and 1964) and Generation X (born since 1964) raise the interesting question of the respective weights of societal values and of professional socialization in shaping public servants' values.[54] As there is no crucial difference at the executive level between the values of the underrepresented mature cohort and those of the overrepresented Baby Boomers, the test will come when more members of Generation X move into executive positions. Based on the hypothesis that these public servants will adopt the attitudes and values of their generation, Eleanor Glor advocates an entirely different approach to ethics, in order to appeal to them successfully. As they are neither like the duty-driven mature cohort

nor like the self-motivated, rebellious boomers, they need to be given precise and practical guidelines and a flexible mix of benefits and working conditions.[55]

A study of French-speaking managers in Quebec from both the federal and Quebec governments suggests that socialization may nonetheless have its effect. Although both groups shared the same language, worked for similar departments and lived in Quebec, the federal managers were more enthusiastic about the more competitive individualistic practices of the public management movement, while the Quebec government managers, although generally in favour of the movement, had doubts about these competitive techniques and were opposed to reducing or abolishing job security.[56]

Style and Substance in Administrative Reform

With few exceptions, recent important management reforms have come from the desire of politicians and business people for change. True, there have been public servants in key central agencies willing and able to develop concrete reforms in response to this demand, but we in Canada have not had doctrinaire senior bureaucrats who, as in the case of New Zealand, persuaded ministers that reform was necessary. As we will show, the auditor general has been a leading voice in favour of many NPM reforms but has also shown ambiguity about their results.

Gilles Paquet writes that there have been "tectonic changes" in Canadian governance, following "transformation in the underlying assumptions at work, in the social rules and mechanisms" supporting governance.[57] The drift has been "from egalitarism to subsidiarity" (which seems to mean "look after yourself").

A British observer, David Clark, finds that underlying recent reforms is the "generalized belief that the state and its interventions are obstacles to economic and social development."[58] Even so, he finds two versions of reform, the neo-liberal and the neo-statist. The main difference between the two approaches is that they agree on a leaner state and alternative ways of delivering services, while the neo-liberal school blends management reforms into its restructuring agenda, while the neo-statist tries to protect the state and its services by reforms for their own sake. Clark places the governments of the U.K., Canada, Alberta and Ontario in the neo-liberal school and those of France and Quebec in the neo-statist school.

In a study of the introduction of the NPM in Britain and the U.S., Daniel Cohn writes "it can be seen as the management technology best suited for carrying out the policies of the new elite consensus" on the role of the state in society.[59] As he puts it, "[t]he goal is no longer to protect society from the market's demands but to protect the market from society's demands."[60] The NPM attracted politicians in the two countries, he said, because it offered two advantages. First, it was part of an attempt to create a sense of crisis in order to attack what Margaret Thatcher had called "the corrosive effects of socialism." Second, it allowed politicians to shift much of the blame for reforms and their consequences to public servants and to other governments.

Each of these scenarios has some immediate appeal for explaining what happened in Canada and its provinces. Quebec has been the least willing so far of the large provinces to cut back the state in the neo-liberal manner. Premier Lucien Bouchard put forward deficit elimination as a necessary preamble to sovereignty. Much of the political discourse about the free trade agreements is couched in terms of the need to be part of the world-wide movement to make the world safe for investors. An exaggerated sense of fiscal crisis was used to justify downsizing at the federal level and in Alberta.[61] Also, the temp-

tation to shift blame to public servants was evident in the Al-Mashat affair[62] and in the wake of the Walkerton, Ontario, water-pollution scandal. And yet, the picture does not quite fit. Clark notes that Canada has elements of both neo-liberal and neo-statist strategies, downsizing, but also embracing managerial reform for its own sake. In what follows, we will hold that Canadian politicians have been willing to trust their public servants to implement and make operational their reforms and that they did not share the pathological suspicion of public servants that was seen in Britain, the United States and New Zealand. In other words, like their senior bureaucrats, they have been moderates, not conviction-driven ideologues.

In the area of administrative reform, it is said that most changes in the 1980s were concerned with downsizing, while, in the 1990s, Canada joined in the public management revolution.[63] In terms of results achieved, this is probably true of the management reforms of the 1990s, but a number of reform attempts of the 1980s were precursors. In financial administration, Canada was a leader when it introduced the envelope system in 1979.[64] The attempt to give a contractual nature to delegations of managerial power under the Increased Managerial Authority and Accountability operation (1986) and the creation of the first special operating agencies in the late 1980s were ideas borrowed from other Commonwealth countries.

However, these were moderate, not to say timid, reforms. Neither transformed the federal administration as similar reforms had done in Britain, Australia and New Zealand. Even the policy initiatives to downsize the state were moderate. Nothing much came of the Nielsen Review, which might have led to a rigorous and selective downsizing. A serious attempt was made to get program spending under control, but its progress was swept away by the uncontrollable surge of spending caused by the recession of the early 1990s.[65] In comparative context, Canadian privatizations and deregulation were moderate.[66] There was increased recourse to contracting out, but few cases of exaggerated or wholesale abandonment of functions.[67] At the same time, the Mulroney government adopted important access-to-equality legislation in 1985, strengthened the Official Languages Act in 1988, and reformed the Public Service Employment Act in 1992 in the wake of the Public Service 2000 exercise. These were all the work of reform, not the dismantlement of the state.

In the 1990s, more hardy innovations occurred, in the Program Review, alternative service delivery (ASD), and information technologies (IT). As in the U.S., campaigns and competitions were introduced to encourage individual and organizational innovation.[68] Still, the Canadian experience puts us in the middle of OECD countries for the number and extent of reforms introduced.[69] As Sandford Borins puts it, we sampled many public management reforms, but did not indulge fully in any.[70]

The style of these reforms was generally moderate, as was the substance. Since the Glassco Royal Commission on Government Organization in the early 1960s, Canada has made a considerable place for consultants, but not as great as in the U.K.[71] An outstanding characteristic of the Canadian reform process is that while they frequently left the details to their officials, political leaders kept overall political control.[72] This is true of Alberta and Ontario, the most radical reformers among the provinces.

Another reason for Canadian ambiguity in public management reform is the divided attitude of the Office of the Auditor General. In some ways, the OAG has been the leader in calling for such reforms since the famous outburst in 1976 about Parliament losing control of public spending and the subsequent creation of the Lambert Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability.[73] In this respect, the OAG was a portal into the federal administration of accounting and management

ideas from the private sector, as both the person and the new wider functions of the office were chosen with the approval of the accounting community.[74] But the OAG appears to have two constituents, legislators and the consulting industry, and this leads it into an ambivalence that Denis Saint-Martin calls "schizoid": on the one hand, the OAG has pressed for an end to stifling bureaucratic controls; on the other, in the case of the scandal at HRDC, it faulted the department for inadequate bureaucratic controls.[75]

In sum, ever since the Lambert Commission report in 1979, the main public service reform efforts have been to improve public management. The preoccupation was such that after twenty years' concern to make senior public servants better managers, and with the return of budgetary surpluses, the last six years have seen renewed emphasis being placed on the restoration of the policy function.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In the area of financial management, none of the usual Canadian moderation has been at work. In turn, the Alberta government of Ralph Klein from 1993, the federal government of Jean Chrétien from 1994, and the Ontario government of Mike Harris from 1995 took drastic steps to end budget deficits. Alberta reduced its expenditures by about 20 per cent in three years, cut about 20 per cent of its civil service, and changed from a deficit to a surplus; Canada cut $17 billion, or 14.48 per cent off spending over four years and 39,000 jobs, or about 17 per cent[76]; Ontario cut the public service by 16 per cent in two years, cut spending by 11 per cent and eliminated its deficit. The agendas of the Conservative parties in Alberta and Ontario were similar: pretty well every kind of expense was cut – health, education, welfare – labour regulation was reduced, functions were transferred to municipalities, others were contracted out, school boards were amalgamated, and hospitals were closed. At the same time, these reforms were carried out by determined leaders who did not hide what they were about and who consulted widely before acting.[77] They both acted decisively and swiftly, in the manner approved by rational choice theory, but they do not appear to have acted from that theory.

The same could not be said for Canada. When the Liberals were elected in 1993, they had promised to reduce not to end the deficit. Program Review appears to have been initiated by the combined efforts of Treasury Board president Marcel Massé, finance minister Paul Martin and their senior officials.[78] Decisive action did follow, and the deficit was eliminated in five years. According to figures from the International Monetary Fund, no other country of the G-7 group came even close to the Canadian success in eliminating its deficit and in reducing the share of net debt in gross domestic product.[79] However, where the cuts in Alberta and Ontario were visible to all, the deepest federal cuts and changes were not so evident. Major cuts were made in transfer payments to provinces, welfare and farm allowance payments were de-indexed, and the government withdrew from financing unemployment insurance. The size and duration of UI payments were reduced; the number of unemployed eligible for them declined from eighty-three per cent in 1989 to forty-two per cent in 1997.[80] The cumulative effects of these changes were, in the words of Michael Prince, to move the federal government's involvement in the 1980s and 1990s from "health and welfare to stealth and farewell."[81] While there were no widespread consultations at the federal level, federal practice and that of Alberta and Ontario showed the state at its authoritarian best. Other institutions, provinces, municipalities, school boards and health institutions were unilaterally on the receiving end, and no talk of partnership could disguise their subordination. Partnerships were for lesser stuff. Such powers are available to Westmin-

ster-type governments, but the president of the U.S. must bargain with the two houses of Congress for every financial measure.

There were similarities in the way the cuts were carried out in all three jurisdictions. The Department of Finance set targets and closely controlled conformity to them. At the same time, public servants and decentralized agencies were asked to propose the necessary changes. Alberta and Ottawa had very similar lists of questions that were put to departments. The Alberta list asked, "Is the program/service a core requirement? Does the service provide a common/public good? Is it a candidate for termination?"[82] If not, what levels of funding and service should be provided and how? The extraordinary thing about Program Review was the degree to which public servants were asked to answer political questions about the need for spending and the way it could be delegated.[83] Peter Aucoin adds, "It is difficult to imagine that the process used in this case, with its heavy reliance on the public service to manage strategic change, could have been adopted in the 1990s in any of the other three Westminster systems."[84]

Aside from budget cuts and debt elimination, the most enduring change in financial management appears to be results-based management. In this area, the provinces, starting with Alberta in 1993, have been the leaders.[85] According to Evan Potter, this is part of the sea change that has the federal Treasury Board acting as management board rather than as chief controller.[86] The board is to be the source of strategic planning, policies and standards. Departments are to control themselves, subject to monitoring by the TBS. The standards are part of the strategic-planning process.[87] An important aspect of this development is that the TBS will no longer apply the rules universally and indifferently to all; the rules are instead customized for each department.[88] This trend has been present ever since the introduction of the Planning Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS) in the early 1970s. There was no standard definition of a program imposed on all departments; each adapted the idea to its needs. The same was true of program evaluation. These changes represent an important dilution of the bureaucratic dimension of public administration.

An interesting aspect of this new role for the Treasury Board is the production of an annual report on Canada's performance, using nineteen social indicators. While such a report might have been expected in the past from Statistics Canada, to have the government's management board doing it underlines the willingness to be held to account for results achieved. As was mentioned above, however, much improved reports to Parliament have not had much impact on the members.[89]

Canada has a very good overall reputation with respect to very low levels of corruption. According to the reputational index published annually by Transparency International, Canada consistently ranks in the top ten countries out of the ninety or so listed.[90] However, several recent major scandals suggest some mixture of the effects of downsizing, the loosening of contracting rules in the name of managerial flexibility, and the ever-present tendency for governing parties to wish to reward their supporters.[91]

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

With respect to human resources, despite Jocelyne Bourgon's statement that we have not had a career service, the Public Service Commission's study on executive succession makes it clear that we have indeed had one.[92] True, only External Affairs and the military were organized for careers along the lines of European or the Japanese bureaucracies, but many people have spent their careers in it and most deputy ministers have come from its ranks.[93] In recent years, the share of indeterminate or perma-

nent employees in the overall public service population has run at about eighty per cent, but it is declining.[94] However, there has been a long tradition of outside recruitment at relatively high ranks. One reason for this was the American-style position classification scheme adopted after World War I. As the Gordon Commission of 1946 put it, this kind of classification put many obstacles in the path of able civil servants; "something is seriously wrong with the management of what is intended to be a career service."[95]

Renewed concern for public service careers has come in the context of both heavy downsizing and the imminent departure of a large cadre of senior employees who are reaching retirement age (forty-one per cent of current executives in the next ten years).[96] Restructuring and downsizing have taken their toll everywhere, creating a "quiet crisis."[97] Exactly what is the crisis and how serious it was is not clear. In the midst of the cutting, both APEX and the major federal employee unions expressed serious concern for the morale of their members.[98] Christian Rouillard has found little evidence of a "survivor syndrome" among federal public servants in Quebec, although about one-third spoke of stress and fatigue.[99] The federal employee surveys of 1999 and 2002 found surprising levels of job satisfaction (high 80s) and a sense of the importance of and pride in the respondents' work unit. In 2002, roughly three-quarters of respondents were satisfied with the progress of their careers, but fifty per cent did not think that they were classified fairly, and one-third did not think that the hiring process is fair. Where the crisis may be seen is in the almost half of respondents who feel that the quality of work has declined because they are expected to do the same work with fewer resources. Only about one-quarter reported that they were under pressure to work more than regular hours. These are presumably higher-level employees, Peter Larsen's study of "ten tough jobs" in managing the federal public service found that long hours are a common feature, but then this has been the case for a long time.[100] Less than half of the respondents to both surveys felt that they have a say in decisions and actions affecting them, and similar numbers felt that there is meaningful consultation with unions on workplace issues.

Recent concern for human resources and consensus began with the La Relève initiative launched in 1998 by the clerk of the Privy Council and head of the public service. The accent on reforming the career public service has been continued under the two subsequent heads.[101] The present approach to careers seems ambivalent. Under La Relève and the Leadership Network, individuals are responsible for their own careers,[102] but they are managed as a corporate resource,[103] and the aim is a "unified public service."[104] The effort is aimed at the individual and at organization culture. Just as was the case with Public Service 2000, the recent operations are somewhat élitist, and one is hard-pressed to find reference to public-sector unions in them.

The Public Service Commission study of 2002 established that there are enough people in the system to ensure continuity in executive ranks, despite the large numbers of impending departures. About three-quarters of the people surveyed by them were interested in executive careers, women more strongly than men, visible minorities more so than others.[105] So the problem becomes one of proper training and career management to prepare promising candidates.

The chosen answer to problems of morale, career succession and public service renewal is found in the adoption in 2000 of a policy of continuous learning.[106] It involves a mix of training, fast-tracking, mentoring, and career assignments. It is to be integrated into departmental management practices. It will be used as a tool to promote both the integration and the advancement of women and the minority groups targeted for employment

equity programs. The idea of the "learning organization" as a way to ensure continuous improvement is not only a commitment to certain techniques of personnel management, it is also a strategy of public service reform based on the notion of a professional public service working in partnership with political leaders.[107] So it has political implications, designed as it is to reassure elected representatives and to be a viable alternative to strategies of politicization, dismemberment of the public service or privatization that have been adopted elsewhere.

The new policy commits the government to providing all permanent employees with an opportunity to create a personal learning program by 2004, and the chance to follow it "subject to the operational requirements of their organizations."[108] They have their work cut out for them. In both employee surveys, one-third of respondents said that they would be reluctant to ask for a "development opportunity" and, of those who had, forty-one per cent had been refused. Another intriguing question raised by the concept of the learning organization is what happens to the learning when the learners move on. Under this approach, the notion appears to be strictly individual, and mobility is the key to the common public service culture. During the Canadian Centre for Management Development's action-research working group on common services in 2001–02, the witnesses from library and archival services expressed serious concern about the lack of care taken to preserve for posterity records that would document the fruits of this learning.

Since its creation in 1988, CCMD was able to establish itself as the government's source of expertise on public management, despite being itself a victim of downsizing. Under the Public Service Modernization Act, it became the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) and inherited the long-standing training function of the Public Service Commission. Whether the appropriate analogy in this area is the single window or market testing and competition remains to be seen. The intention, in any case, is for the continuation of strong departmental training functions.

In Westminster systems, devolution of powers in personnel management is an important theme, so much so that there is concern for maintaining cohesiveness and accountability.[109] In Canada, the trend has existed for over twenty-five years, but it recently took a new leap when the Public Service Modernization Act of 2003 included new delegations of staffing powers to deputy ministers. This combines with a dilution of the merit system: henceforth, the hiring authority will only need to determine that a candidate meets the qualifications for the job, not that she or he be the best candidate for it. This will effectively move us from a competitive examination system to a qualifying examination system. A comparative study in 1992 by the U.S. Merit System Protection Board found that Canadian managers already had more control over appointments and downsizing than did their American counterparts.[110] Even so, the six months that it takes on the average to fill a vacant position was deemed unacceptable in this era of urgent recruitment needs.[111] Abandoning the strictly competitive rule will no doubt greatly reduce the possibility of appeal against an appointment. This may be the latest in a series of incremental changes, but it nevertheless marks an important step away from the old merit system and one that has passed almost unnoticed outside Ottawa.

Concern for cohesiveness and accountability has led to two kinds of solutions. First, results-based management has come to personnel administration, so, here too, managers will have to report on results achieved and not just on respect for the rules. Second, there is new reliance on codes of ethics for public servants.[112] V.S. Wilson et al. consider that ethics cannot be taught like a skill or tech-

nique, hence the importance of a code.[113] The United Kingdom has opted for a Civil Service Code as a management document that is part of the terms of employment. On the other hand, Australia has included both a statement of values and a code of ethics in its public service act. In 2003, Canada adopted the executive decision solution with a code that appears to unite a number of previously separate texts in a coherent whole and adds to them statements about values that reflect the work of the Tait working group on values.

Despite some slacking off as a result of downsizing, Canada's policy on two official languages remains a remarkable success at the level of representation. The reality of comprehension and use of the two official languages is quite different, however.[114] The two employee surveys show very high levels of respondents who feel free to use the language of their choice with their superior, or at a meeting, and who have access to working materials, including software, in their preferred language. Assuming that few English-speaking public servants have problems of this kind, however, the fact that ten to fifteen per cent of respondents do not agree with these propositions shows that from a third to a half of the thirty per cent of the public service who are francophones do still have problems. If we consider that the amount of attention given to a problem is a sign of its importance in an organization, then language policy ranks high in Canadian public service values. We collect more statistics on the subject than does any other country.[115]

In other areas, equal opportunity has been a recent and serious priority, even overriding the primacy of the merit principle.[116] Measured in terms of available candidates, in 2000 the federal public service overall had achieved some overrepresentation for aboriginals, women and people with disabilities but was still far from representativeness for visible minorities.[117] This is considerable progress compared to the figures of 1993 and a much better record than the private sector for all categories. It is an area where the courts have interpreted the Charter in such a way as to force the hand of governments. In a case in 1987 (*Action–travail femmes* v. *CN Railway*), the Supreme Court upheld the use of quotas to remedy a situation of discrimination. In 1998, the federal government accepted a judgement against it in the Federal Court, which makes some 230,000 present and former women employees eligible to receive roughly $3.6 billion in compensation for past pay inequity.

Political support is evident at the highest levels for some forms of equality in the deputy minister group. Aside from language representation, Bourgault finds Canadian originality in the numbers of women deputies and in the more egalitarian social origins of deputies than is found in most countries in the comparable group.[118]

While we see here some important innovations in staffing and training, recent concern for human resource management is in full continuity with the past. David Zussman has counted no less than thirty different major reports on the subject since the institutional reforms of 1967.[119]

ALTERNATE SERVICE DELIVERY

Canada has been an enthusiastic participant in the search for methods of alternate service delivery. While we have not been the most committed to most of these techniques, we have adopted special operating agencies (SOAs) and, more recently, legislated agencies, partnerships, contracting out, information technologies, and single windows.[120] One of the strongest commitments has been to information technologies, which facilitate many of these innovations.[121] In this area, Canada is recognized as the leader among developed countries. The federal government's Government On Line (GOL) project aims to have 130 services from thirty departments

and agencies on-line by 2005. Nine services were covered in 2001, thirty-one in 2002.[122]

The figures generated by these new arrangements can be staggering. Cynthia Alexander, for example, reports that in 1997 100 million payments, or half of the total for year, were being made electronically to the Receiver General.[123] At that time, the Industry Canada web site *Strategis* was receiving 200,000 visits per day, and 160,000 Canadian federal public servants were linked together by internal government e-mail. The question for this paper is what it all means for the Canadian model. Insofar as information technologies allow big savings and service improvements, they help sustain the federal state in trying times. Ignace Snellen considers that much more of this kind of reform is to come.[124] The changes will be such as to challenge traditional concepts of public administration, such as decentralization. Transparency about production processes will be improved, but coordinated databanks will reduce citizens' privacy. He and Borins consider that many jobs at the delivery level will disappear, but Borins thinks that there will be an increase in higher-quality jobs further up the hierarchy.[125] Government On Line will be a powerful boost to horizontal coordination, since single windows and kiosks require much coordination upstream in order to serve citizens seamlessly.

The new collaborative arrangements pose problems for political and administrative accountability. Under the new arrangements, public servants will be less anonymous than they have been. The auditor general in 1999 wrote that the new collaborative arrangements put accountability at risk.[126] Some of the problems will be fixed with greater experience. In 1999, "[o]f the ten collaborative arrangements examined in the audit, none provided for ways to deal with non-performance. Only one established the conditions under which the agreement could be terminated."[127] Others are inherent in divided responsibility, where one party answers to ministers and legislatures, while the other answers to other political leaders, company management and shareholders, or non-profit organizations' managers and members.

The current emphasis on governance accentuates another tendency long present in Canadian politics: reliance on social organizations to achieve some of the objectives of the state. Ian Brodie writes that the Court Challenge Program has, since its creation in 1978, allowed non-profit groups in the areas of language and human rights to bring legal action against laws and administrative decisions in a way that they would otherwise have not been able to before.[128] A good example is the National Action Committee's Legal Education and Aid Fund (LEAF). It represents, says Brodie, "the embedded state at war with itself in court" as "fragments of the state enlist fragments of society in battles against other state fragments."[129]

More general aid to voluntary-sector organizations has received a new basis recently, after almost falling victim to Program Review. The Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) came about in 2000 as a result of recommendations by a joint roundtable created in 1999. The initial allotment of $95 million represented "more money than ever before at a sectoral level for capacity building."[130] Equally important and innovative are the creation of a Voluntary Sector Task Force in the Privy Council Office, a series of joint concertation tables, and a Voluntary Sector Commission (made up of representatives from the voluntary sector) to oversee and aid voluntary organizations. It all amounts to "a daring and unique initiative."[131]

ABORIGINAL GOVERNMENTS AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

A field where Canada seems to be innovating is that of autonomous governments for some communities of native peoples.[132] According to Peter Clancy, instead of creating an autonomous claims commission as in the United States, in Canada "the inser-

tion of the claims negotiation function directly into the centre of a middle-range 'clientele department' [IANC] suggested that Ottawa's overriding values were caution, incrementalism and stability, as opposed to innovation, systematic response and developmental change."[133] As well, it took the federal government a long time to decide to treat the aboriginal population not as individuals needing help but as members of communities deserving of collective recognition. The most important developments are, therefore, quite recent: the first comprehensive settlements with Yukon first nations were in 1995, the Nisga'a treaty in 1998, and the creation of Nunavut in 1999.

As Graham White describes the situation in the North, we now have a new level of government resulting from native self-government agreements.[134] In addition to the federal, provincial/territorial and municipal levels, there are in B.C. (Nisga'a), the Yukon and the Northwest Territories native self-governments, with separate constitutions and citizenship. This did not occur in Nunavut because the Inuit, with eighty-five per cent of the population, dominate the political scene sufficiently not to need separate self-government institutions. So Nunavut and Nunavik in northern Quebec have self-government based on open political communities (all residents may vote), whereas the others are closed. Even so, the governments of the NWT and Nunavik run along very different lines than do those of the provinces or of Canada. There are no parties, the premier and the ministers are elected by the members of the legislature, and consensus is the prevailing mode of government. Debate is much more dignified than it is in legislatures in the south. Add to these levels of government a wide variety of co-management boards for land, environmental and wildlife management, involving first nations, provinces and territories and the federal government, and we have an impressive patchwork of overlapping governmental institutions.

In general, federal and provincial and territorial laws set the parameters of self-government and joint management boards, but practice may produce a variety of norms and standards. In Nunavut, two other innovations are noteworthy: policies are to be guided by Inuit traditional knowledge ("IQ," for *Inuit qaujimajatuqangit*); and Inuktitut is to be the official language.[135] At present, the goal of a representative public service is far from realization. Figures for 2002 released by the Nunavut Human Resources Department show that Inuit people fill forty-one per cent of the overall positions they might be expected to hold, but only about 20 per cent of the managerial and professional positions.

Again, if we measure values by the amount of attention being given to a question, a huge amount of resources is going into the multiple negotiations that continue in the provinces and the territories. Although pragmatism and incrementalism in the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs may have retarded the successful outcome of many negotiations, recently a good deal of pragmatism has been shown by participants on all sides. The solutions offend some people, who object to placing some groups outside the Constitution. Certainly they reflect a postmodern, postrationalist state. At the same time, as Graham White points out, they show the flexibility of Westminster principles and institutions.[136]

The Contours of a Model of Canadian public administration?

In her *Fifth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada*, Jocelyne Bourgon named the following as features of the Canadian model of public service reform:

1. a belief in the importance of government in the life of a society, not necessarily less but affordable government;
2. the convictions that reform needs to start with examination of the role of government in the future and that this role will need to be one of leader or catalyst, with government working in partnership or alliance with other public, private or non-profit institutions;
3. a refusal to accept that policy and implementation must be separate in principle. Both functions are judged to be essential to good performance;
4. the recognition of "the importance of a well-performing, professional and non-partisan public service"; and
5. the belief that leadership is necessary from both elected and appointed officials.[137]

This is a model based on convictions and preferences, but one that can be verified in practice.

In our survey of the literature, several of these ideas are confirmed as practices, because, for instance, our political leaders have generally worked with public servants to achieve reform and have not seen the market as everywhere superior to public-sector practice. Moreover, this model meets our requirement that any model of public administration must include the political context. Our search having covered the wider subject of Canadian public administration, what should we add or change to achieve a model of Canadian public administration? We can answer this question in two stages: first, by comparing what we have seen to the bureaucratic model, and then by proposing a simple model that may have the elegance and parsimony of that of J. Bourgon.

In Figure 1, we compare the Weberian model, as gleaned from his writings, and the Canadian model of public administration, according to the components set out previously. All of his four main characteristics have been altered by recent changes, but none has been completely rejected. At the level of permanence, we still have a career service and indeed are trying to improve it to ensure its ability to produce new generations of quality leaders. Conflict-of-interest provisions still separate the public function from private life, but partnerships blur the line between them. Concern seems greater for creativity and innovation than for continuity, but the overall stress on moderate reforms means that continuity is preferred to revolutionary change and there is recognition of the need to preserve institutional memory.

Hierarchy is still respected in the system, political direction is assured, and any devolutions of power are supposed to be accompanied by

Figure 1. Comparison of the Weberian Model and the Canadian Model of Public Administration (2003)

Weberian Model	Canadian Model of Public Administration (2003)
Permanence	Permanence
– career service	– career service concerns
– separation function/private life	– separation, but partnerships
	– moderate administrative reforms, incomplete separation pol/admin
– continuity	– innovation, creativity, loss of institutional memory
Hierarchy	Hierarchy
– rules and discipline	– political direction assured
	– devolution, but corporate concerns
	– internal accountability works, but externally by crisis
– secret and professional reserve	– same, but access and political rights
Impersonality and universality	Impersonality and universality
– objectivity and impartiality	– same, but partnerships
	– concern for groups (language, equity, native peoples)
Rationality	Rationality
– specialization	– specialization
	– greater concern with horizontality
– legality	– ↑ with Charter, ↓ with partnerships
	– results-based accountability
	– client/citizen satisfaction

corresponding requirements to report on results achieved. Access to information has reduced the level of secrecy, but it is a continuing battle and in no way authorizes public servants to disclose information on their own. There seems to be moderate satisfaction with the workings of internal accountability, but various recent crises have shown us that external accountability (i.e., to Parliament) still works mainly by crisis.

Impersonality and universality, in the forms of objectivity and impartiality, are still qualities required of the professional public service. However, partnerships introduce something less than universality, as the partner has a privileged position with the administration. Devolution also means that a greater variety of norms and standards is being applied. Finally, and most important, the recognition of collective rights under the Charter, access to equality, language legislation and native self-government have seriously undermined the universal state (if it ever existed).

Rationality is still very much with us, represented today above all by results-based management. Citizen-centred management has led to the promotion of horizontal management, which counteracts the divisive effects of the division of labour. The specialty that Weber was thinking of, law, was given a big boost by the adoption of the Charter of

Rights and Freedoms, but it is undermined by partnerships, which are more pragmatic in nature. The attempt to measure and increase client or citizen satisfaction is also diluting the weight of law in our administrations.

Does this add up to a Canadian model of public administration? Can we extract from these observations a model that has the simplicity and parsimony of J. Bourgon's model? We think so and present here its five most striking characteristics:

1. The Canadian model has the potential for *strong political control.* This characteristic has been present all along, but it is aggravated by the recent domination of one party, the Liberals, the weak opposition and lack of experience of the members of the elected legislature. The principal restraints are federalism, the Charter, parliamentary agents and public opinion.
2. The model features a *strong legal framework*, buttressed by the Charter and the courts and, to some extent, by independent control agencies.
3. At its heart, there is an *autonomous, professional public service* that has proven itself willing and able to work with governments of different parties and of differing ideological tendencies. The present thrust of the leadership of this public service is to install a "learning organization" as a way to ensure its survival and its best contribution.
4. Our public service and its political leaders have a tradition of *pragmatism and moderation* that keeps it evolving. We have mildly embraced downsizing and the new public management but kept politics in the picture and avoided overcommitting to one or two radical reforms.
5. The model features fairly strong *tolerance for ambiguity* as represented by multilayered government and multiple loyalty of many of its citizens. At present, new forms of government for the northern territories and self-government agreements with various aboriginal communities reinforce this trend.

Does this model meet the test of a good fit mentioned at the outset? Does it retain the essentials and not dwell on the peripheral? While it will be for the reader to decide, the only points that raised any doubts in the comments received on an earlier version were the central management power of the Treasury Board today and the reality of the shift to results-based management. Both of these objections were discussed above. True, the board has adopted a new stance of management board, making strategic plans, giving guidance and requiring departments to discipline themselves, but it still retains final control, both because of its control of spending and because when delegations cause problems (as in too many competing administrative systems), it can revoke them or insist that departments collaborate in finding some common solution. Also, while our practices may fall short of a rigorous results-based management system (an observation that is consistent with the model presented here), we have nevertheless moved into the results-based mode of managing, in all official documents, and deputy ministers are expected to respect it under the new Management Accountability Framework.[138]

While this model tries to include significant new practices at all levels, it is of necessity heavily oriented to what happens at the top of the machine or the system. It cannot adequately cover two peripheral clusters – that of the "structural heretics" or non-departmental organization forms,[139] nor that of the world of the front-line public servants, so vividly described by Barbara Wake Carroll and David Siegel.[140]

If it represents the typical in Canadian public administration, how far is this model original? While in comparison our reforms have rarely been the most radical, most of the five points contain elements of originality: in particular, the power of the

prime minister and the central agencies; the depoliticization of senior public service appointments; the accent on the learning organization of the professional public service; the recognition of minority and native groups' collective rights; and the moderation of leaders and public. Overall, as we noted at the beginning, the distinctive elements of the model add up to a unique case.

In the image of the Canadian people, administrative reform and measures of downsizing have generally been moderate. The main exception is the Program Review and, even here, our typical reaction followed in concern for the "quiet crisis" in the public service. This moderation may be a blessing or a problem. If it keeps us from giving a thorough chance to obtain the benefits of such reforms as special operating agencies, or to take a holistic position on such issues as negotiations with aboriginals, it creates problems due to timidity. Lack of clear policy in immigration, say Geneviève Bouchard and Barbara Wake Carroll, transfers policy-making to front-line public servants.[141] If, on the other hand, it stems from a traditional Canadian conservatism, the opposite of the revolutionary spirit so dear to our two neighbours to the south, it may have advantages in continuity and support for the regime. Moderation has left us, says Peter Aucoin, ready and able to catch the next wave.[142]

From the point of view of public administration, it is hoped that the model we identified will remain basically intact. The one thing we know for certain is that it will continue to evolve. Previously, we have had colonial administration, partisan administration that came with the granting of responsible government, bureaucratic administration for the fifty years after 1918, and then a growing hybrid in which public servants were supposed to reconcile the bureaucratic virtues of impartiality, probity and legality with the managerial values of efficiency, effectiveness, flexibility and innovation.[143] We have stopped well short of taking the managerial model to the extreme of treating public administration like nothing but an enterprise, but we have adopted enough of this view to create many situations of confusion and ambiguity. There are solutions to at least some of these dilemmas in the practices of other countries (say, the rules of parliamentary accountability of permanent secretaries in Britain[144] or the completely different dynamic of autonomous agencies in Sweden). However, we have a difficult country to govern and it may be that the constant search for the middle way reflects wisdom in the face of that reality.

Can the model adapt to change, or is it likely to be such an obstacle that a new model will have to replace it? No one can answer such a query, because the answer will depend on the evolution of factors outside each administration. Some form of proportional representation, for instance, would probably stabilize a core representation in the House of Commons and make for more stable relations between Parliament and the public service. Insofar as the model reassures politicians and allows them to assert control over public servants, it offers some guarantees for evolution and not radical change.

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